

Inscription Rulebook

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About the Game

Inscription is a two player game, where you battle your opponent using creature cards.

On your turn, you may play any number of cards you are able to.

You then ring the bell, to signify your turn is over.

At this point, all damage is dealt to the opposing spaces, in the direction of the arrow on the board, and any ***sigils*** effects are activated.

- Both players have 2 lives (signified by candles) When a player loses all their lives, the game ends.
- When a player has an advantage of 5 damage, their opponent loses one life.
- Some cards have ***sigils***, which are modifiers. More about that later.
- In some cases, the losing player creates a ***death card***.

Setup

Deal each player 5 Squirrel cards in their squirrel space.

Place the draw, item, rare, upgrade, swaps and smoke cards in their corresponding spots on the board.

The Scale / Damage

Damage is kept track of using the scale, which starts at zero.

When a player deals damage, they move the slider the corresponding number of slots towards their opponent.

This results in a tick-tock effect, with the slider constantly moving back and forth each turn.

When the slider reaches the end of the scale (equal to an advantage of 5 damage) that player loses a life.

Gameplay

The board is a 4x2 grid represented by paw symbols.

Each player owns 4 of the spaces on their side of the board

- On the first turn, players draw 3 creature cards, and 1 squirrel.
- At the start of all other turns, the player must draw *either* a creature card from the draw pile, or a squirrel.
- No more than 3 damage can be dealt on the first turn for both players.¹ If the damage output of the cards is larger, only 3 is counted.

¹ This also applies to the first turn after a player loses a life

Card Costs

All cards come at a cost. Whether it is blood, bones, or simply space on the board. In order to play a card, you must first examine its cost, which is shown in the top right.

There are three options:

➤ Blood

- ◆ To play a card you must **sacrifice** creatures, corresponding to the number of blood drops on the top right corner.
- ◆ To sacrifice a card, it must already be in play on the board. You 'kill' the creature you want to sacrifice and remove it from the board into your dead pile². Squirrels go back to their pile.
- ◆ Sacrificing always grants 1 blood no matter the card's cost.²
- ◆ This is repeated for as many blood drops are required.
- ◆ Blood drops must be used immediately on a single card, and can not be stored or transferred onto multiple cards. You can not play additional cards while sacrificing.



➤ Bones

- ◆ Upon any creature's death a single bone² is given to the card owner, and stored next to the board on the owner's side.
- ◆ When a card that costs bones is played, the corresponding amount of bones shall be removed from the player's pile.
- ◆ A bone is granted for each creature sacrificed.



➤ No cost

- ◆ The card is free to play. Eg, squirrels.

² This property may be affected by a specific sigil

Card Health & Damage

All cards have a specific amount of health, indicated by the number in the bottom right.

When playing a card, a corresponding amount of 'hearts' should be placed behind the card - which are used for visually keeping track of that creature's health.

At the end of the owners turn, all of their played cards will strike the card opposing it³ for the amount of damage that is written on the card in its bottom left.

That amount of damage is taken away from the opposing card's health, and the number of 'hearts' should be changed accordingly.

If there is no opposing card, damage is dealt to the other player directly.

When a card's health reaches 0, it perishes, and goes to the dead pile. The owner receives a bone.

The sigils

What is a sigil? - it's the symbol on the bottom of the card that modifies the card's behavior in a major way.

Please see the index at the end of this rule book for all details.

Also provided on a separate cheat sheet for each player.

³ This property may be affected by a specific sigil

Styles of Play

There are several ways of preparing the playing decks.

1. 3-card double pick

Note: Can be time consuming for new players who are learning all sigil effects.

3 cards are laid onto the board.

Player A chooses 1 card. Player B then chooses 1 card. The remaining card is discarded.

When both players have 10 cards, the order of picks is switched and player B has first choice.

Repeat this process until both players have 20 cards.

Include Rare cards

2. Simple

Not Recommended. This option is only provided if players want to play immediately and are happy to have a more random and less balanced game.

A single deck, very fast to set up.

Both players draw from the same deck, preferably from which rare cards are *excluded*.

If a magpie card is used, draw 10 cards from the top of the shared deck and choose one from that selection. This is to avoid overwhelming the player with choice.

Additional Rules

Over Damage

If a card kills the opposing card, and still has additional damage points. Those points are forfeited and no additional damage is passed on to the other player on that turn.

However for an alternate, harder version of the game, you can include overdamage. So all damage will be counted for. First hitting the card opposite, and then the remaining damage hitting the player directly. (not recommended)

Cards that can not be sacrificed

All creature cards are able to be sacrificed.


However some cards (such as a dam, chimes or items) have a grey/blue background colour. And they can not be sacrificed as they are not alive.

One exception is the Warren card due to an error made while printing. The Warren can be sacrificed.

Player death

When a player manages to get a 5 damage advantage.

A couple of things happen:

- The losing player extinguishes one of their candles.
- The cards in your hand and all bones are kept for the next round.
- All cards currently in play are removed from the board into the dead pile. (however they do not die, no bones are awarded and cards with the  sigil are removed from play)
- Both players draw 3 additional cards from the deck and 1 squirrel.
- The losing player also is granted a special card named 'the greater smoke' from the 'smoke' pile of cards.
- The damage scale is reset to 0.
- The losing player goes first.

When a player has extinguished both of their candles, they lose.

☯ Death Cards ☯

If you wish to play another round after the game has concluded.

The losing player may optionally create a **Death Card**.

Death cards act the same as usual cards, and are shuffled into the deck for future games. Either player may pick up and use a death card.

➤ Creating a Death Card

- The blank card is placed into a plastic card sleeve, and may be written on with sharpie (to be removed later)
- The dead card pile from the game is shuffled and three cards are revealed.
- The player may choose the **cost of** one of these cards. The cost is written onto their new death card. The other two cards are discarded.
- Three more cards are revealed and the **power** and **health** values are chosen.
- This is repeated and the **sigils** are chosen.
- The player may now draw a portrait and name their creation.

To use death cards, please remove the temporary plastic sleeve and place it to the side of the board. Shuffle the blank card into the draw deck.

When either player picks up the blank card, they may now put on the plastic sleeve and use it as normal. If multiple death cards are in play, the plastic sleeves are shuffled before applying.

You can also choose to play with all previous death cards ever made if you'd like.

☯ The items ☯

Item rules are currently being playtested. Playing with items is optional.

Items can be used at any time during your turn, do not always need to be played onto the board, and have no cost.

Each time a player has a disadvantage of **exactly** 4 damage, they gain an item at random.

Once an item is used, it is placed at the bottom of the item card pile.

SIGILS



Airborne

This card will ignore opposing cards and strike the opponent directly.



Mighty Leap

This card blocks opposing Airborne creatures, making them hit this card instead of the player directly.



Fledgling

After surviving for 1 turn, this card grows into a stronger form.



Touch of Death

This card instantly kills any card it damages.



Many Lives

When this card is sacrificed, it does not perish.



Stinky

The creature opposing this card loses 1 damage.



Sprinter

At the end of the owner's turn, this card moves right relative to the owner, after it cannot move right, it switches directions, this repeats.



Hefty

The same effect as the sprinter card. (seen to the left) However this card pushes all other cards along with itself.



Corpse Eater

If a card that you own dies by combat, this card may be played from your hand on its space for free even during your opponent's turn.



Waterborne

On the opponent's turn, this card flips upside down. Anything attacking this card's space attacks directly.



Worthy Sacrifice

This card counts as 3 Blood rather than 1 Blood when sacrificed. Excess blood is not stored for later.



Fecundity

When this card is played, a copy of it enters your hand.



Bifurcated Strike

This card will strike each opposing space to the left and right of the spaces across it.



Trifurcated Strike

This card will deal damage to the opposing spaces left, right, and opposite of it.



Sharp Quills

Once this card is struck, the striker is dealt 1 damage.



Unkillable

When this card perishes, it returns to your hand.



Leader

Creatures adjacent to this card gain 1 damage.



Bone King

When this card dies, 4 Bones are awarded instead of 1.



Burrower

This card will move to any empty space that is attacked by an enemy to block it.



Guardian

When an opposing card is played opposite an empty space, this card moves to that space.



Loose Tail

The first time this card would be struck, a tail is created in its place and this card moves to the right. The tail is struck instead and *can* be sacrificed.

**Ant Damage**

The damage dealt by this card is equal to the number of ant cards you own that are currently in play.

**Ant Spawner**

When this card is played, an Ant enters your hand.

**Rabbit Hole**

When this card is played, a rabbit enters your hand. The warren card is able to be sacrificed.

**Bees Within**

When this card is struck, a Bee card enters your hand.

**Hoarder**

When this card is played, choose any card from your deck to add to your hand. The opponent has to be shown the card picked and the deck must be shuffled afterwards.

**Trinket Bearer**

When this card is played, you will receive an item¹ if you have room.

**Bellist**

When this card is played, Chimes are created on adjacent empty spaces.

**Dam Builder**

When this card is played, Dams are created on adjacent empty spaces.

**Ringer**

This card's damage is dependent on how close it is to the bell: From 4 at the space closest, to 1 at the furthest.

**Handy**

This card's damage is dependent on the number of cards you are holding in your hand.

**Rorrim**

This card's damage is equal to the enemy opposing it or 0 if there is no enemy.

ITEMS¹**Pliers**

You will place a block on the scales.

**Scissors**

You may cut up one of your adversary's cards. It is destroyed.

**Hourglass**

Your adversary will entirely skip their next turn.

**Harpie's Birdleg Fan**

All your creatures will attack as though they have the Airborne Sigil this turn.

**Fish Hook**

Hook one of the opponent's cards and take it as your own. You must have an empty space on your side to receive it.

**Magpie's Lens**

Single-use version of the hoarder sigil.

**Squirrel in a Bottle**

A Squirrel is created in your hand.

**Black Goat in a Bottle**

A Black Goat is created in your hand. (found in the additional cards pile)

**Hoggy Bank**

You will immediately gain 4 Bones.

¹ Items are currently in development and may not be available for play.

Notes for Printing your own version of this game

Playmat and other designs are found in the [main google drive folder](#)

Two of every card from the base game were printed, with some additions.

#	Normal Cards	#	Normal Cards	#	Normal Cards	#	Rare Cards
2	Adder	2	<i>Elk Fawn*</i>	2	River Snapper	2	<i>Mothman - 3 Stages* (used rarely, too hard)</i>
2	Worker Ant	2	<i>Field Mice*</i>	2	Raven	2	Moleman
2	<i>Ant Queen*</i>	2	Great White (unused, too hard)	2	<i>Raven Egg*</i>	2	Long Elk
2	Bat	2	Grizzly (unused, too hard)	2	River Otter	2	Urayuli
2	<i>Beaver*</i>	2	Kingfisher	2	Skunk	2	Amalgam (not great, no tribes used)
2	<i>Beehive*</i>	2	Magpie	2	Sparrow	2	<i>The Daus*</i>
2	Bee	2	Mantis	2	Stinkbug	2	Mantis God
2	Black Goat	2	Mole	2	Stoat	2	Geck
2	Bloodhound	2	Moose Buck	2	Stunted Wolf		
2	Bullfrog	2	Opossum	2	Wolf		
2	Cat	2	Porcupine	2	<i>Wolf Cub*</i>		
2	Cockroach	2	Pronghorn	2	Turkey Vulture		
2	Corpse Maggots	2	Rat King	2	Warren		
2	Coyote	2	Rattler				
2	Elk	2	<i>Skink*</i>				

The following cards are printed separately with a different back design. The upgrade cards are for Fledglings that grow up over time, and the swaps are for special events such as the skink tail, or the beaver dams. Different backs are used for easy sorting

#	Misc Cards	#	*Upgrade Cards*	#	Swaps	#	Items
10	Squirrels	2	Elk	4	Bee	2	Boulder
2	Smoke (unused)	2	Wolf	2-4	Chime (grey bg)	1	Snowy Fir
2	Greater Smoke	2	Raven	2-4	Dam (grey bg)	2	Stump
2-4	Blank Cards (death cards)			2	Wriggling Tail	1	Grand Fir
1	Leshy (for fun)			1	Black Goat (for item card)	1	Frozen Opossum
1	Ouroboros (for fun)			1	Opossum (for item card)	1	Scissors
1	Caged Wolf			2	Rabbit	1	Squirrel Bottle
				2	Worker Ant	1	Harpies Fan
				2	Field Mice (without Fecundity sigil)	1	Fish Hook
						1	Hourglass
						1	Black Goat Bottle
						1	Pliers
						1	Magpies Lens
						1	Hoggy Bank

I also modified and lazer cut the scale, to work as a back and forth linear scale, rather than a weight based scale. This saves space, requires many less parts and feels incredibly satisfying to touch as it has integrated magnets.

The game box is a vintage wooden box I picked up from an antique store, and added a few custom wooden inserts to hold the pieces.

The playmat is custom printed and has a side tray for additional cards such as upgrades or special cards. The cards themselves were all printed professionally by boardgamesmaker.com

The rulebook was initially inspired by huligan37 on reddit. But has been heavily modified after countless play sessions testing the rules and balance of the game for new players.

Many custom parts of vinyl were cut on a Cricut machine.

The bell was found on amazon, but there are many duplicates across ebay & etsy. The prices seem to fluctuate all the time.

The bones, heart tokens & candles I picked up from Aliexpress

<https://www.aliexpress.com/item/10050...>

<https://www.aliexpress.com/item/10050...>

<https://www.aliexpress.com/item/33049...>